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The network of United Nations information centres: activities and strategic directions

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations information centres are key to the work of the Department of Public Information, giving its global work a local accent. The reforms undertaken by the Department over the past five years have resulted in the adoption of a more strategic approach to its work, which includes developing communications strategies with clear goals and key messages. The information centres play a central role in the overall implementation of this strategy. With the renewed emphasis on greater United Nations system-wide coherence, the centres are likely to be playing an ever more important role in communications at the country level. The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 61/121, summarizes the activities of the network of information centres and outlines the steps taken by the Department to give them an enhanced role in implementing the new strategic approach to promote the work of the United Nations among its key constituencies at the national, regional and subregional levels.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/121 the General Assembly emphasized the importance of the network of United Nations information centres in enhancing the public image of the Organization and in disseminating United Nations messages to local populations. The Assembly recognized that the network of United Nations information centres, especially in developing countries, should continue to enhance the impact and activities of the Organization, including through strategic communications support, and called upon the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of that approach. The Assembly also stressed the importance of rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres and requested that the Secretary-General continue to make proposals in that direction and report thereon to the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session.

2. The present report summarizes the activities undertaken by the network of United Nations information centres, particularly in the area of communications campaigns, and provides an update on the measures taken by the Department over the last year to strengthen the centres through a new strategic approach that emphasizes the optimal use of available resources to achieve a greater overall impact.

II. United Nations information centres: a key resource in mobilizing public opinion

3. The reform undertaken by the Department of Public Information over the past five years has resulted in the adoption of a more strategic approach that includes developing communications strategies with clear goals and key messages and identifying target audiences. The United Nations information centres are key to the work of the Department, giving its global work a local accent. With the renewed emphasis on greater United Nations system-wide coherence, the information centres are likely to be playing an ever more important role in country-level communications.

A. Communications campaigns

4. Bolstered by the more prominent role assigned to them, the information centres have emerged as crucial players in promoting United Nations priority issues at the national level. The contemporary world is characterized by fast communications and highly developed technologies, which require enormous financial resources to achieve maximum benefit. Even with such resources, taking language and culture into consideration, to name just two of the most obvious elements that vary from place to place and have significant impact on communications efforts, it is never certain that local markets are adequately covered. This is where information centres make a most important contribution to the global efforts of the Department of Public Information. By translating communications materials into local languages, organizing events within communities, approaching opinion-makers and placing op-ed articles by senior United Nations officials in national publications, they provide a crucial link between the development and successful execution of a communications campaign. The activities of the centres are also critical to the increasingly important evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department's communication activities. Pilot projects such

as media coverage analysis are gradually becoming a feature of the Department's work, both at Headquarters and in the field. This exercise, carried out with the assistance of the information centres, allows the Department to have a clearer and more accurate understanding of the results of its communications efforts and provides information that may prove useful in future communications campaigns.

5. The key role of information centres in "getting the message out" is now incorporated into communications strategies from the start-up of many campaigns. Based on improved evaluation methods showing that outreach achieves greater media coverage and impact, as well as meeting strategic goals, specific messages and information materials are increasingly tailored to regional audiences.

6. Following are examples of such work carried out by the information centres over the past six months:

- The *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007* was launched in New York on 10 January 2007. In preparation for the launch, working in close collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Public Information drafted press releases for both the global launch and regional launches. Working with specific information centres, the regional launches were carried out in a number of locations, including Bangkok, Beirut, Mexico City, Moscow and Pretoria. Although the main launch took place two days before the regional launches, the latter received extensive media attention because press releases and presentations of the report by economists at the various centres focused specifically on the economic prospects of the specific region.

- The advance planning for the launch of the 2006 report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/60/861) involved the information centres from the start, as the migration issue has different dimensions in different regions. In addition to global messages and materials, regional fact sheets were produced for use by information centres in their media outreach and report launch events. The role of the centres in monitoring media messages was also critical. More than 60 per cent of the 170 media clips collected by the Department of Public Information were in outlets that participating centres had targeted.

- For Human Rights Day 2006, the information centres successfully placed an op-ed article by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on human rights and poverty in 30 publications in 27 countries, including the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong, China), *The Scotsman* (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), *Die Presse* (Austria), *The Standard* (Zimbabwe), *La Libre Belgique* (Belgium), *Milenio Diario* (Mexico) and *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil).

B. United Nations Communications Group at the local level

7. The United Nations Communications Group, the global communications platform of the United Nations system formed six years ago, has emerged as a vital tool in the implementation of the Organization's communications strategies on its priority issues. Now, with the creation of communications groups at the country

level, the information centres have become an important player in this well-knit and carefully designed communications approach.

8. In 2005, at their annual meeting, members of the Communications Group concluded that the success of the Group's efforts had been largely determined by its ability to coordinate activities at the country level. It was necessary, therefore, to establish communications groups at the country level wherever entities of the United Nations system were at work. Based on a standard operating model agreed upon at the global level by principal members of the Group, United Nations country teams were invited to establish local chapters, bringing together the entire United Nations system under a communications umbrella.

9. The information centres are given an important role in the functioning of the communications groups at the country level. Under the agreed operating model, in countries hosting an information centre, the communications group would be chaired by the Director of the centre, or, in the absence of a Director, the most senior Information Officer of any United Nations entity represented on the United Nations country team. The information centres would also act as the secretariat of the local group. In countries with no information centre, the Resident Coordinator of the country team is to designate a communications focal point from any United Nations entity within the team, to carry out such functions. Communications groups at the country level have now been created in over 60 countries, in most cases with information centres taking the lead.

10. The creation of the United Nations Communications Group has contributed to the strengthening of a cohesive and integrated image of the United Nations. Several local communications groups have reported that their activities have given higher visibility to the work of the country teams and increased the coherence and unity of its messages. Through pooling of resources and information-sharing, the Communications Group has been able to provide ongoing collaborative analysis of the national media environment and to undertake appropriate media responses. Some local groups have produced national communications strategies and workplans and have established year-long calendars of events, updated periodically and amended as needed. Media outreach initiatives have been particularly successful with several local groups reporting weekly radio and television programmes, joint media encounters, field trips to United Nations projects and public service announcements. Some have also initiated joint advertising campaigns, inter-agency exhibits and book fairs. Most importantly, as a result of close cooperation among United Nations communicators, there is now a clear recognition within the country teams about the importance of communications as a key factor in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda and its overall work at the country level. This is the beginning of a new culture of communications within the United Nations system.

Box 1

- In Burkina Faso, United Nations system partners, under the aegis of the local communications group, have begun producing a common newsletter, replacing the half a dozen or so newsletters that once touted the work of each individual agency. Similarly, the local communications group in Pakistan has started producing a United Nations system newsletter
- In Senegal, United Nations partners have joined hands to produce regular radio and television programmes
- In Cape Verde, partners of the communications group have set up a United Nations system common library; in Mauritania, they have established a United Nations documentation centre with media monitoring as its primary objective
- In Japan, communications group partners joined together in December 2006 to celebrate the "50 years of the United Nations and Japan". The event's main attraction, a live talk show by United Nations staff members from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Volunteers who had recently returned from the field received extensive coverage in the local media
- In the Russian Federation, a common communications group website (www.unrussia.ru) has over 1,000 visitors per month

C. Partnerships

11. As with the Department of Public Information at the global level, the United Nations information centres increasingly rely on the local network of non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and private sector entities to re-disseminate United Nations messages, connect with targeted audiences and implement issue-based campaigns. Using the creative energy and collective resources of such groups, the information centres are able to organize special events, publish local language materials and connect with new audiences, often in remote and outlying areas. Some examples are set out here:

- On the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), the United Nations Information Service at the United Nations Office at Vienna organized a series of events, including a German version of an exhibit, "No Child's Play", created by Yad Vashem. Activities by other centres include: a series of educational and interactive outreach programmes titled "Hannah's Suitcase", with the participation of survivors of the Holocaust (Prague); a round-table discussion with the participation of local authorities and survivors of the Holocaust, in cooperation with the Israelite Federation (Rio de Janeiro); and a national poster competition, in cooperation with the Shalom Foundation (Warsaw).

- The World Federation of United Nations Associations held its thirty-eighth plenary assembly from 6 to 11 November 2006 in Buenos Aires, at which the Associations adopted the Buenos Aires Declaration, reaffirming the purpose of the World Federation as "a peoples' movement for the United Nations". The information centres in Mexico City and Buenos Aires took part in the Assembly and made a presentation on partnership opportunities between United Nations Associations and the information centres. As a result of the encounter, the information centre in Mexico City is developing an outreach programme aimed at United Nations Associations in Latin America.

- In countries with peacekeepers serving various United Nations missions, information centres often partner with local authorities to promote the United Nations message on peace. On the occasion of the International Day for United Nations Peacekeepers (31 May), several information centres arranged special events, including displays and seminars, in association with local government authorities and civic groups. In November 2006, the information centre in Lima organized a workshop with 200 Peruvian soldiers who were about to join the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Also in November, a group of Indian army officers visited the information centre in New Delhi to learn about the United Nations and its peace operations. A similar visit was organized last year by the information centre in Ouagadougou for officials of Burkina Faso's Ministry of Defence.

12. The information centres provide a crucial link between the Department of Public Information and local civil society groups in reaching out to African students through the expanded use of the Internet. Building on the success achieved at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis 2005, the Department, through its Global Teaching and Learning Project, organized two video chats, in partnership with the information centres in Senegal and Cameroon and the International Education and Research Centre (iEARN) youth leadership conference, held in Enschede, the Netherlands, during the 2006 World Cup, to talk about the link between sports for peace and development. A third live video chat was organized in January 2007 with the information centre in Yaoundé to help celebrate National Youth Day, giving young people the opportunity to discuss projects they are developing to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals with the Director of the New York Office of Sport for Peace and Development. Discussions are under way to expand this new communication tool, which has been integrated into the United Nations cyberschoolbus website (http://cyberschoolbus.un.org), to information centres around the world, thereby increasing their access to the United Nations system.

13. The information centres, in cooperation with local educational non-governmental organizations, are also promoting model United Nations programmes, an educational activity focusing on learning about the United Nations and its work. The information centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi is supporting two separate model United Nations that will take place in March 2007.

Box 2

- The East African model United Nations (a four-day conference) will bring together about 800 student delegates from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- The Kenya model United Nations will be attended by about 300 to 400 students (a four-day conference) from about nine local universities. The project was initiated by the information centre in Nairobi in 2002.

III. Progress in further rationalizing the way the United Nations information centres work

14. In its effort to redefine the role of the information centres and to make them a more effective vehicle for the United Nations global communications efforts, the further rationalization of the network of information centres remains a central focus of the Department of Public Information. Working within the parameters of resources at its disposal, the Department has continued a three-pronged approach: a strategic realignment of its resources to better meet its changing communications needs in the field; expanded use of the latest information technology; and working together at the regional level for greater impact.

A. Strategic realignment of resources

1. Redeployment and strengthening of staff resources

15. As reported in the 2006 report of the Secretary-General on the continued rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres,[1] the Department is seeking to strengthen its presence in major media hubs, while giving centres in those locations a greater coordinating role at the regional level. During the period under review, the newly appointed Directors (D-1) of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria have assumed their functions. In addition, to enhance the ability of these offices to achieve greater coordination of communications activities at the regional level, each of these centres has been strengthened through the redeployment of P-4 Information Officer posts. These new positions have been filled.

Box 3

To enhance the ongoing web development in the respective regions, a webmaster post has been added to the staffing of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria, supplementing the centrally coordinated efforts to promote local web development and apply the latest information technology to the Department's operations in the field.

[1] A/AC.198/2006/1.

16. The Department expects that it will soon receive the approval of the Office of Human Resources Management for the classification of a number of existing National Officer posts (at the NO-C level) for those information centres where the national officer is the most senior staff member. This will more accurately reflect the level of their responsibility and will strengthen the Department's key role within local United Nations country teams on communications matters.

2. New opportunities for staff development and training

17. Providing field staff in various occupational groups with training opportunities to update their professional skills remains a priority for the Department. In addition to providing support for staff participation in locally available training courses aimed at upgrading their communications and information technology skills, the Department continues to look into ways to enable various categories of its field staff to take part in relevant training programmes organized regionally or locally.

18. The Department also expects to include several reference assistants from information centres in Asia and the Pacific in a regional workshop for United Nations depository librarians scheduled to take place at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok in the second half of 2007. To supplement these efforts, all centres have received a DVD containing the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre (DHLink) training materials available electronically.

19. An important objective of these efforts is to equip the Department's field staff with the expertise to train their local constituencies, including depository librarians, where appropriate, in the use of the DHLink's electronic resources. This is a meaningful step towards the transformation from "collections to connections", including in the field, where this process is slower owing to limited access to the Internet.

20. The Department is also exploring the possibility of offering appropriate group training opportunities to its administrative support staff in its field offices to bring them up to speed on a broad range of administrative rules, regulations and procedures.

Box 4

- With the generous extrabudgetary support from the Government of the Dominican Republic, several reference assistants from information centres in Latin America took part in the Regional Caribbean Workshop for Depository Librarians, held in Santo Domingo in January 2007, with the participation of trainers from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre.
- Partnering with the Office of Human Resources Management, the Department has provided the staff of the United Nations information centres, Services and offices with about 3,000 online tutorials covering a variety of job-related skills and competencies, in addition to some 1,200 online books, to supplement limited training funds available from the regular programme budget.

21. The Department has continued to provide training for newly appointed information staff (for example, Directors of the information centres and locally recruited information professionals) both at Headquarters and at other venues, including centres in neighbouring countries where communications issues and concerns may be similar, in order to update them with regard to the Department's strategic planning, communications priorities, techniques and approaches, as well as to exchange lessons learned and best practices.

3. Strategic realignment of operational funds

22. While consideration is being given to the proposals from the information centres for their 2007 communications activities, the Department is continuing its efforts to ensure that a greater portion of its operational resources are allocated to fund these activities, which are achieving greater visibility for the work of the Organization among the key audiences in those countries. The continued support of host Governments in alleviating the high cost of rent and maintenance in some locations is very much appreciated, as this allows the centres to utilize the limited resources available to them for outreach activities. During 2006, the Governments of Australia and of Trinidad and Tobago, through generous extrabudgetary contributions, assumed the responsibility for the payment of rent for the premises of the United Nations information centres in Canberra (relocated from Sydney) and Port of Spain.

23. The Department would like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the support of the majority of host Governments of United Nations information centres and several others in providing extrabudgetary support to United Nations information centres, including the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe in Brussels, thereby strengthening their ability to more effectively reach the audiences in the countries served.

24. With regard to other locations hosting United Nations information centres where the cost of rent and maintenance continues to consume a significant share of their respective operational funds, the Department will renew its approach to the host Governments concerned with a view to securing extrabudgetary contributions and support, as appropriate, to supplement the regular programme budget and to increase the availability of resources for outreach activities to key local audiences.

IV. Upgrading the use of information and communications technologies

Providing centres with new equipment

25. Given the need to meet the basic overhead and operational expenditures of information centres, including rental and maintenance of premises, utilities, communications costs and cost recovery fees to UNDP, few resources remain in their regular allotment to carry out the systematic equipment replacement exercise required for the network. Despite this, efforts have continued to identify ways and means of maximizing the use of the latest available information and communications technology.

Website

26. Development of websites in languages spoken by the local audiences in the countries covered by the United Nations information centres, Services and offices is a crucial component of the Department's communications efforts at the field level. By pooling the information technology expertise of the Information Centres Service at Headquarters and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe in Brussels, and working together as a virtual team, the Department has introduced and implemented a web content management system, which is hosted in Brussels. The aim is for all 63 United Nations information centres, services and offices to have operational websites by April 2007. This will allow visitors to learn about the work of the United Nations, both globally and at the local level, and in the local languages, wherever appropriate. The redeployment of webmaster posts to the United Nations information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria will further strengthen this virtual team of information technology specialists, facilitating further web development and maintenance in these regions.

Box 5

Forty-seven United Nations information centres currently maintain websites in 5 official (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) and 29 non-official languages (Armenian, Bahasa, Bangla, Belarusian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Farsi, Finnish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Kiswahili, Japanese, Malagasy, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Uzbek).

Internal communications

27. All 63 field offices now have access to iSeek, the Secretariat Intranet, until recently available only to staff at Headquarters locations, which provides them with ready access to a wealth of valuable information. The Department also continues to develop StratCom, its internal interactive strategic communications network. In addition to being the main repository of internal programmatic and administrative guidance and information, StratCom is also used to integrate the work of information centres, services and offices with the work done at Headquarters and to link them directly to each other, while also providing for their direct access to the website of the United Nations Communications Group.

Information management

28. The Department is currently working on an information management tool that will enable information centres, Services and offices to manage the explosive growth of electronic and non-electronic data through the introduction of an online database system. As part of this initiative, many routine administrative procedures will also be computerized, enabling field offices to streamline information-sharing and administrative and reporting procedures and to make them more user-friendly. This new tool will enable efficient data collection, validation and processing, thus eliminating redundant data and duplication of processing efforts, both at Headquarters and in the field.

E-mail communications

29. With nearly half of its staff located in field offices, e-mail has evolved into a critical, cost-effective communications tool for the Department. However, owing to the lack of a reliable local information and communications technology infrastructure, some information centres continue to experience e-mail outages on a regular basis. In addition, owing to operational realities on the ground, information centres use commercial e-mail providers under various e-mail domain names, as a result of which there are no standard e-mail addresses and the potential for loopholes in data security. Building on advances in communications and e-mail hosting technologies, the Department is currently undertaking an initial analysis to identify a reliable, secure and cost-effective e-mail system, which should result in the development of a unified, coherent, accessible and easily identifiable e-mail address for all the staff in information centres, Services and offices, thereby strengthening the common identity of the United Nations at the field level.

Use of other electronic information resources

30. Through the Consortium and Collections Unit in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre, the Department is exploring the possibility of providing its field offices with access to: various commercial electronic databases, covering such subject areas as peace and security, disarmament, legal issues, news and current events and social affairs and politics; reference works such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias and manuals; and scientific and academic research, as well as various regional resources.

V. Working together at the regional level for greater impact

A. The role of United Nations information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria

31. As reported last year in the Secretary-General's report on the continued rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres (A/AC.198/2006/1), the Department has strengthened the leadership of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria in an effort to rationalize the work of the centres and maximize resources. Emphasizing the leading role of these centres, which are located in major media hubs, the Department has assigned them additional responsibilities with regard to other, often smaller centres in their respective regions, including:

(a) Assisting information centres and country teams in the region in promoting United Nations issues and priorities;

(b) Facilitating the work of the other information centres in the region by assisting them in strategic thinking and communications planning, sharing plans, ideas and best practices;

(c) Making suggestions on programme delivery and providing feedback to the Department at Headquarters;

(d) Facilitating and coordinating the exchange of information and ideas among the information centres in the region through regular dialogue and consultation and by assisting them with troubleshooting and problem-solving;

(e) Developing working relationships with regional media, nurturing joint regional approaches with United Nations system regional communications focal points and advising the Department at Headquarters on regional approaches to priority issues.

32. While there is added emphasis on the work of the information centres at the regional level, it is of primary importance that information centres in the region add value to promoting communications at the country level, within the country teams and local communications groups.

33. There are early indications that this approach is contributing to greater coherence in the Department's response to communications challenges and opportunities. The role of the Department within the United Nations country teams has been strengthened, as witnessed by the fact that Directors of the information centres are increasingly being invited to participate in the periodic retreats and workshops of United Nations country teams in the region. This has also led to the fostering of team spirit and mutual professional partnership, including through ongoing dialogue, sharing of experiences and lessons learned and discussions of the best approaches to regional communications challenges. The presence of dedicated senior United Nations communications in each of these regions has been well received by their counterparts in the United Nations organizations working at the field level and has positioned the information centres to carry out a key role as a resource and authority on regional communications strategies and approaches. The directors of the information centres in Cairo and Mexico City have led the way by convening regional communications groups, thus providing a forum for the discussion of common United Nations communications issues, concerns and opportunities in the respective regions and on the development of joint projects on key issues. The Director of the information centre in Pretoria, who was appointed more recently, is pursuing a similar course of action (see para. 37 below).

34. The regional United Nations communications focal points in the Arab region met in Cairo in June 2006 to establish a regional United Nations communications group. The group has drafted a regional workplan and has begun implementing a number of projects. In follow-up, in December 2006 the Director of the information centre in Cairo was invited to address the first meeting of United Nations resident coordinators in the Arab region and to lead the discussion on communications challenges, tools and advocacy of United Nations issues in the region.

35. At a meeting led by the Information Centre in Mexico City in July 2006, the United Nations communications group for Latin America and the Caribbean, representing 13 organizations of the United Nations system, was established. Among the regional communications initiatives undertaken over the last year, the 2006 "Stand Up Against Poverty" campaign, an initiative in support of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, brought together youth groups, schools, non-governmental organizations and the media and resulted in the holding of over 200 diverse events in 16 countries. The central Spanish language website of the observance, developed and hosted by the information centre in Mexico City, served as a one-stop venue for information about the campaign in the region.

36. The information centre in Pretoria is also expected to lead efforts to organize a regional communications group for sub-Saharan Africa. Among possible region-wide projects is the proposal to extend the very successful South African model United Nations programme for high school and university students to participants from other African countries and a broad-based regional communications campaign to promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals on the continent.

37. Given the importance of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which houses two major United Nations entities and a large cluster of United Nations offices, the Department is exploring the possibility of strengthening the information centre in Nairobi to allow it to play an enhanced role in communicating the substantive work of the Organization, to wider audiences in Kenya and beyond. In doing so, the Department would reinforce the centre's role as the coordinator of communications and public information for the United Nations at that location. The centre in Nairobi will also liaise with the centre in Pretoria, as appropriate, to discuss common communications strategies in the region and to maximize synergies wherever possible. With this aim in mind, consideration will be given to allocating additional resources to the information centre in Nairobi.

38. To discuss the parameters of this new approach to communications work at the field level and to clarify the scope of the role of the information centres in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria with regard to the other centres in their respective regions, in December 2006, the Department convened a brainstorming session at Headquarters, which included the participation of the Directors of the three centres. The report of the High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, "Delivering as one" (A/61/583), provided a basis for the discussions, with the objective of clearly positioning the information centres as the communications focal points within the United Nations country teams. The elements of this new approach were later shared with all United Nations resident coordinators in locations hosting United Nations information centres in the three regions.

B. Working together in Europe

39. To further enhance the effectiveness of its outreach in Europe, the Department, working through its three key communications offices in Brussels, Geneva and Vienna, introduced a number of innovative approaches to networking and cooperation. The ongoing dialogue between the three offices, which took into account their strengths and comparative advantages has resulted in the identification of several areas of cooperation.

40. In 2006, the three offices launched coordinated activities in the area of human rights. In Vienna, the focus of last year's annual journalists' forum was on human rights. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva worked with the Department at Headquarters to promote the work of the newly established Human Rights Council, organizing meetings with members of the media in advance of the Council sessions. The United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels also worked to publicize the issue of human rights, in cooperation with European Union institutions, think tanks and media outlets based in Brussels, developing a page dedicated to the issue on its website in 13 European languages. Taking advantage of

innovative approach taken by the Department to rationalizing its communications work through the strengthening of major media hubs has already reaped benefits, including the development of new partnerships and the sharpening of United Nations messages.

45. The Department of Public Information is taking a number of steps to further strengthen this process, including:

(a) Organizing a regional communications workshop for information centres in Latin America and the Caribbean, to take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil in the first half of 2007. It will focus on enhancing both internal and external partnership;

(b) Developing strategies to further rationalize the work of the United Nations information centres in Asia and the Pacific, taking into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region, as well as the geographical distance among the locations hosting United Nations information centres;

(c) Seeking to revitalize its partnership with UNDP and the United Nations Development Group office, which oversee and coordinate the work of the United Nations country teams in over 166 countries, in order to ensure the successful operation of the communications groups working at the country level. As part of this effort, the Department is seeking a review of the terms of reference for resident coordinators with regard to their communications responsibilities, in particular those who also serve as Directors of information centres. In undertaking these responsibilities, resident coordinators will be asked to ensure the establishment and continued functioning of a United Nations communications group to bring together the communications focal points for the United Nations system within the country team;

(d) Continuing to provide briefing material on key issues to resident coordinators on a regular basis.

VII. Conclusions

46. The work of the Department of Public Information is driven by clearly defined communications strategies that focus on targeted audiences, system-wide partnerships and increased use of new information and communications technologies. As the Department has evolved over the years, both in terms of what it does and how it does it, so have the information centres. Through the realignment of resources, the upgrading of their technological infrastructure, building partnerships at local and regional levels and ensuring regular interaction with Headquarters, the Department has sought to make the centres more effective and more relevant to the work of the United Nations at the country level. These efforts will continue as the Department strives to equip the centres for broader success.

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Corrigendum

Paragraph 26, box 5

For the existing text, *substitute*

Box 5

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The United Nations website: progress towards parity among official languages, accessibility and content management

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report outlines the progress being made towards parity among the official languages, accessibility and content management, as well as the development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations website. It is the eighth report submitted to the Committee on Information on the United Nations website.

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I. Introduction

1. The official United Nations website (www.un.org) went online in June 1995 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. Since then, one of the major issues of concern of the Committee on Information and the General Assembly has been parity among the six official languages on the website. The Secretary-General has addressed this issue in seven previous reports: A/AC.198/1999/6, A/AC.198/1999/9 and Corr.1 and 2, A/AC.198/2000/7-A/AC.172/2000/4, A/AC.198/2001/8, A/AC.198/2002/6, A/AC.198/2005/6 and A/AC.198/2006/3. In a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/57/355), the Secretary-General laid down the resource requirements for establishing the six language units on a firm footing to meet the challenges of moving towards parity of the official languages on the United Nations website. The present report reviews progress made towards language parity on the United Nations website, provides additional information on the new requirements of ensuring accessibility to the website by persons with disabilities and highlights progress towards more efficiently managing the content on the website.

II. Background

2. In its resolution 61/121 B of 14 December 2006, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the United Nations website was an essential tool for the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, Member States and the general public. In the same resolution, the Assembly also reaffirmed its request to the Secretary-General to "ensure, while maintaining an up-to-date and accurate website, the adequate distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations website among all official languages, taking into consideration the specificity of each official language on a continuous basis".

3. The General Assembly recognized the efforts of the Department of Public Information to implement the basic requirements for accessibility of the United Nations website by persons with disabilities. It called upon the Department to continue to work towards compliance with all levels of accessibility requirements on all pages of the website with the aim of ensuring its accessibility by persons with different kinds of disabilities.

4. The General Assembly recalled paragraph 74 of its resolution 109 B of 8 December 2005 and reiterated that all content-providing offices in the Secretariat should continue their efforts to translate into all official languages all English language materials and databases posted on the United Nations website in the most practical, efficient and cost-effective manner.

III. Current website usage

5. Visitors from more than 212 countries and territories access the United Nations website, viewing more than 1.1 million pages daily. Until now, usage of the website was being reported using page views and accesses to www.un.org. However, in reporting on usage of websites the current industry trend favours using "visits" in combination with "page views" or accesses as this provides more accurate data on

usage patterns. Therefore, the Department is using "visits" as a second measure of usage in addition to "page views". In order to interpret these different units of measurement in a useful way, additional clarification is required in the context of their usage for www.un.org:

(a) "Hits" or "accesses" measure the total number of requests made to the server during the given time period (month, day, hour, etc.). Each separate item on a single page will produce a hit when the page is requested by a user. For example, if a page includes three graphics and some text, a request for that page will result in four hits;

(b) "Page views" are those uniform resource locators (URLs) that would be considered the actual page being requested, rather than the individual items that make it up (such as images and audio clips). Any URL that has an extension of .htm, .html, .shtml, .asp, .jsp or .cgi is usually considered a page for purposes of counting page views. Thus the same page referred to in subparagraph (a) above would result in one page view;

(c) "Visits" are recorded when a user makes a request for a page on the server for the first time. As long as the same user continues requesting pages within a given timeout period, they will all be considered part of the same visit. A user can view any number of pages during one visit. If the user makes a request to the server and the length of time since the last request is greater than the specified timeout (currently, 30 minutes), a new visit is counted.

Table 1
Visits, page views and accesses to the United Nations website, 2002-2006

United Nations website	*Visits*	*Page views*	*Accesses*
Yearly totals			
2002		221 433 750	1 606 841 549
2003		268 027 080	2 165 122 997
2004		337 544 975	2 331 566 302
2005	35 322 875	396 566 178	2 766 987 638
2006	49 389 245	413 891 020	—
Daily averages			
2002		606 668	4 402 306
2003		734 321	5 931 844
2004		922 254	6 370 400
2005	96 775	1 085 762	7 575 761
2006	135 313	1 133 948	—

6. Table 1 above shows the number of visits, pages viewed and accesses to the United Nations website from 2002 to 2006. Because of the new measure of website usage, accesses are no longer being tallied. Therefore there are no numbers in the accesses column for 2006. Owing to server problems, statistics for a number of days were not available. To get the most accurate estimate for those days, data has been extrapolated by averaging the data from the days before and the days after.

7. The data provided above still does not provide a totally accurate measure of site usage. Web server downtime, e.g., when the United Nations site is not accessible owing to maintenance projects, hacker attacks or because of server stability problems, reduces the capacity to measure site traffic accurately. Use of caching mechanisms by Internet service providers also decreases the ability to accurately count users. Internet service providers often store page information in a way that makes it easier and faster for their users to access highly trafficked pages, but the process disguises how many page views and visits are actually happening, because the request for the page is never passed on to the originating server.

8. Given the importance of accurate figures on usage, the Web Services Section of the Department of Public Information acquired a new statistics server, which will provide the Department with the ability to measure visitor patterns more accurately and thereby make quick changes to the site as necessary.

9. The upward trend in the use of the website has been consistent among the language sites, although the scale of the increase varies widely. Table 2 below depicts the increase in the number of pages viewed, as well as the number of visits to the website across the language sites from 2005 to 2006.

Table 2
Increase in the number of page views and visits to the United Nations website across languages, 2005-2006

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish*	*www.un.org*
Pages viewed							
2005	10 178 618	18 433 275	318 133 891	18 267 863	11 873 869	19 678 662	396 566 178
2006	12 346 648	24 203 023	365 400 934	21 065 351	16 335 047	24 540 017	463 891 020
2006 versus 2005 (percentage)	+21.3	+31.3	+14.8	+15.3	+37.5	+24.7	+16.9
Visits							
2005	1 542 110	2 411 103	21 359 071	3 766 316	1 566 179	4 678 096	35 322 875
2006	2 445 858	4 085 582	28 737 205	4 596 119	2 919 180	6 605 301	49 389 245
2006 versus 2005 (percentage)	+58.6	+69.4	+34.5	+22.0	+86.3	+41.2	+39.8

10. The number of page views as well as the number of visits registered increases for all languages, with some languages showing a large gain. The growth in visits is considerably higher than the growth in page views. This means that visitors to the United Nations website are coming more often but viewing fewer pages on each visit. One interpretation of this trend is that visitors are taking more time reading the texts, rather than going from page to page reading only portions of them; another is that with greater familiarity with the site and improved search engines, users are able to access the information they want more readily, generally by bookmarking pages frequently visited. It should be noted that a number of directories in the languages that were residing within the English structure were moved to the respective language directories. These had previously been counted under English, but this does not affect the data on usage growth from 2005 to 2006.

11. Table 3 shows the daily average number of page views and visits on the website across languages, comparing 2005 and 2006. The same note applies as in tables 1 and 2: owing to the loss of the log files for a number of days during the time period, some numbers have been extrapolated by averaging the numbers from the previous and subsequent days.

Table 3
Evolution of daily average page views and visits across the language sites for 2005-2006

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish*	*www.un.org*
Page views							
Daily average, 2005	27 887	50 502	871 600	50 049	32 531	53 914	1 086 483
Daily average, 2006	33 286	66 310	1 000 596	57 713	44 754	67 233	1 270 432
2006 versus 2005 (percentage)	+21.3	+31.3	14.8	+15.3	+37.5	+24.7	+16.9
Visits							
Daily average, 2005	4 225	6 606	58 518	10 319	4 291	12 817	96 775
Daily average, 2006	6 701	11 193	78 732	12 592	7 998	18 097	135 313
2006 versus 2005 (percentage)	+58.60	+69.45	+34.54	+22.03	+86.39	+41.20	39.82

12. The overall number of new pages on the site in official languages other than English has steadily risen. The Department is presently responsible for the majority of these language pages. The Web Services Section, which handles the bulk of these pages, has increased the number of new or updated pages in languages other than English or French. Table 4 below shows the number of pages handled by the Web Services Section only. The high figures for updated pages demonstrates the weight this task now represents — a commitment of resources which is compounded by virtually every new page created. The number of new pages in Arabic is low because of temporary staff changes and because, despite serious efforts, the Department has not yet been able to enlist the support of an institution of higher learning for that language for pro bono translation as is the case for Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

Table 4
New pages created and pages updated in 2006 by the Web Services Section of the Department of Public Information

	Arabic	*Chinese*	*English*	*French*	*Russian*	*Spanish*
New pages	879	2 466	1 083	910	1 885	1 278
Updated pages	3 878	5 628	4 370	1 987	5 888	7 791

IV. Progress towards parity among official languages

13. As manager of the United Nations website, the Department of Public Information has been grappling with the goal of parity among the official languages

on the United Nations website as requested by Member States. This challenge also extends to all other content-providing offices. The challenge is complex; its practicality and the scale of resources needed to meet the request of the General Assembly have been submitted in earlier reports to the Committee on Information and to the Fifth Committee.

14. Moving towards the goal of parity in the official languages on the United Nations website has many aspects. Access to official documents in all official languages is now available from the United Nations website, but the day-to-day reality is that new material is placed on the site by author departments in the working languages, English and French, but overwhelmingly in the former.

15. In order for the website to remain fresh and useful, it needs constant updates and revision. This in turn means the challenge of achieving parity becomes more complex every day. The commitment of resources to this function for pages in all official languages is therefore essential, but comes at the cost of slowing the pace in which new material can be processed in all languages.

16. The new posts made available in the present biennium allow the Web Services Section to increase the volume of new and updated postings. At the same time, however, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 66 of its resolution 61/121 B, new requirements, such as making all new and updated pages accessible for persons with disabilities, has meant that the original intended impact of the new posts may not be fully realized. Other efforts to increase parity are centred on the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre (DHLink) which ensures that official documents are fully indexed and made accessible through the Official Document System (ODS) as well as in the Library's United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet). Documents are searchable on ODS by subject in all six official languages of the Organization through the application of the UNBIS Thesaurus. The United Nations website provides links to both of these resources.

17. The DHLink continues to develop its web products with the aim of providing equitable access to United Nations information and knowledge in the six official languages of the United Nations. In collaboration with the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva, DHLink continues its retrospective digitization programme with a focus on Security Council documentation. Documents in all six official languages are scanned, processed for full text retrieval, and posted to ODS.

18. Technical changes are producing progress towards the goal of enhancing the multilingual nature of the United Nations website in a number of ways. The Department continues to work towards enhancing the multimedia elements of the site, and through it, the delivery of material in audio and visual forms to an expanding global audience. Radio programmes in all the official languages, as well as a number of non-official languages, including Kiswahili and Portuguese, continue to enhance the multilingualism of the site and are available both for the listening public and for broadcasters to download. Webcasting, now available in the language delivered, in addition to English, has become an important tool that the Department is planning gradually to expand to the other official languages, again offering a daily enhancement of the multilingualism of the site. Websites created by the network of United Nations information centres are providing information in 28 non-official languages. The rationale behind the drive to enhancing multilingualism on the website is to ensure wider access to information on the United Nations to all the

peoples of the world, and such technical improvements to the site are a key means to that end, along with progress in such areas as improving access for persons with disabilities.

19. Member States have recognized the responsibility of the individual author departments for producing their websites in the official languages. The Department of Public Information has sought to promote actively multilingualism on the United Nations website across the Secretariat bilaterally with author offices and through the Working Group on Internet Matters, which is being revitalized.

20. In terms of its own areas of responsibility, the Department has striven to ensure language parity in key areas of information about the Organization and its activities. For example, the United Nations websites on the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Peacebuilding Commission, Reform at the United Nations, Millennium Development Goals, Human Rights Day, Water for Life Decade, International Women's Day, World Press Freedom Day, United Nations Peacekeeping, Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About and Messengers of Peace, as well as the pages for the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, are available in the six official languages; the United Nations News Centre continues to provide breaking news in all languages; and the same applies to the United Nations Radio webpages, providing radio news in all official languages, in addition to Kiswahili and Portuguese; and all continue to be updated daily. The websites developed by the Department for conferences and events continue to be made available in the six languages. The overall progress has been steady and key information areas on the website such as news — one of the most visited areas of the site — have made significant strides in enhancing the multilingual nature of the site.

V. Making the United Nations website accessible

21. A survey was commissioned by the Department of Social and Economic Affairs to determine how accessible the Internet is for persons with disabilities. The audit, the first of its kind, investigated the accessibility of 100 leading websites, including private and public sector sites, from 20 countries from around the world.

22. The aim of the survey was to obtain an indication of the existing status of accessibility of websites that people with disabilities might access as part of their daily lives.

23. This snapshot produced stark results: most of the leading websites around the world do not meet de facto international standards for accessibility. Many of the sites investigated could be easily upgraded to remove the obstacles that prevent many people with disabilities from using the sites. However, the majority of sites need considerable work.

24. In order to make information on the United Nations and its activities available to the widest range of audience, and in keeping with resolutions of the General Assembly, the Department of Public Information is aggressively pursuing accessibility to the United Nations website by persons with disabilities, including visual and hearing disabilities. The objective is to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium standards, which at the present time are the only standards with worldwide recognition. To improve the level of staff expertise, training sessions on

accessibility were offered to 20 members of the Department involved in web production. In cooperation with the American Foundation for the Blind, on-site demonstration of screen readers by blind users was organized, which provided much needed practical knowledge and understanding of the requirement as well as raising awareness of the issue among content-providing offices.

25. All new web projects are designed to meet accessibility requirements. As resources permit, older pages are corrected to address accessibility issues. The diagnosis and correction of accessibility barriers in existing pages is a process that is more time consuming than the creation of new accessible pages. Therefore the Department pursues its effort to raise awareness on this issue, so that the accessibility factor is taken into account at the start of a project. This, however, increases the production time by an average of 20 to 25 per cent. Development and updates of existing pages have been reduced, thereby further slowing the progress towards parity among official languages.

26. With the adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13 December 2006 (resolution 61/106), the Department, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has begun work on preparing a set of guidelines on accessibility to be applicable to United Nations websites.

VI. Towards a content management system

27. There is a need for a robust and secure system that can grow and develop, leading to greater efficiencies in the management of a multilingual web content as varied as that of the United Nations. Such a content management system would assist in the enforcement of agreed standards, ensure uniformity of statistics criteria and other web metrics among languages and a more accurate and efficient analysis of website usage. The process of standardization of content presentation, branding, management and technology and the creation of an effective architecture and governance structure should begin as soon as possible in order to facilitate migration and subsequent implementation.

28. The content management system would implement a suite of tools to enable more efficient management of content, applications, infrastructure and comply with the World Wide Web Consortium guidelines on accessibility for disabled persons. It would facilitate top-down rearchitecting and consolidation of the existing websites incorporating current best practices for distributed content management, centralized infrastructure management, performance monitoring, management, disaster recovery, business continuity and security. A new architecture would also provide for advanced authorization and authentication capabilities in the future. A content management system would enable better management and enforcement of global policies for content creation, publishing and security, as well as integration with enterprise search and portal tools.

29. The core processes supported by a content management system includes:

(a) Creation of large multimedia and web content;

(b) Publishing of dynamic web content;

(c) Versioning of created and published content;

(d) Storage of web-based documents, materials and content;

(e) Website building in a centralized governance structure.

30. The core benefits of a content management system includes:

(a) Synchronization of content creation and publishing in all six official languages;

(b) Consolidation into a single site of all official United Nations public websites around the world;

(c) Improvement of access to all web facilities for persons with disabilities;

(d) Improvement of content integrity by eliminating multiple copies and enabling strict version control;

(e) Facilitation and enforcement of strong policies on content retention, including usage-based automatic archiving;

(f) Meeting or exceeding all applicable standards for security and privacy;

(g) Formal content publishing workflow, standards, review and approval process to reduce errors and maintain quality integrity of content;

(h) Establishment of pre-built templates for the most commonly requested content types;

(i) Increase in productivity for content creators and technical support staff;

(j) Enabling delivery of rich multimedia content and its management.

31. The Department has been working closely with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management on the prospect of a web content management system. Such a solution, however, is still long term. In the meantime, a short-term solution, such as the use of open source content management system, is being considered. Such an effort would facilitate institutional branding and easier content management.

VII. The search facility

32. In 2005, one aspect of the Department's annual programme impact review focused on improving the user experience of finding information on the United Nations website. After an analysis of the top 100 search queries over a one-year period, findings revealed that overall search requests are highly generic in nature, such as "United Nations", "jobs" and news specific, e.g., "tsunami" and "Darfur". Other popular queries include United Nations agencies, "Charter of the United Nations", country names and peacekeeping missions. Full analysis of search logs was constrained by limitations in the search appliance, most specifically on queries done in Arabic, Chinese and Russian. Search logs currently do not provide non-roman alphabet characters and these reports now are unable to separate by language. Research is continuing for better search analysis tools. As a result of the annual programme impact review, the Department is taking a number of measures to help improve the search experience for users:

(a) A feedback page was made available on search result pages in all official languages;

(b) Key matches continue to be created on the search appliance in order to position the "best bet" web pages for specific types of queries;

(c) More news focus pages were created on the United Nations News Centre website in an effort to consolidate content types and create one stop shopping for similar types of information.

33. However, the full use and further development of the search system to fulfil the demands from other content-providing offices for customized search pages and collections to limit search results to their sites continues. From a management perspective, a much-needed analysis of user search patterns continues to present a challenge. In order to provide this type of follow-up action effectively and efficiently, dedicated resources need to be assigned to it, which means that this task can be achieved only at the cost of limiting progress in other areas.

34. The Department continues to work with the Information Technology Services Division on an enterprise search solution. The Division has issued a request for proposals for an enterprise search solution and the Department has been closely involved in the process.

35. It has not been possible to index the United Nations system websites despite at least a six-month effort of fine tuning, owing to limitations of the current search appliance. The Organization had procured the largest appliance available to the commercial market.

36. The search engine market had matured prior to the creation of the request for proposals and there were other offerings that were server-based and did not have the limitations of the appliance approach and that could operate in a federated fashion giving more flexibility in the mode of operation. The technical evaluation was completed in November 2006 and by mid-February 2007 the Procurement Service was undertaking a financial evaluation.

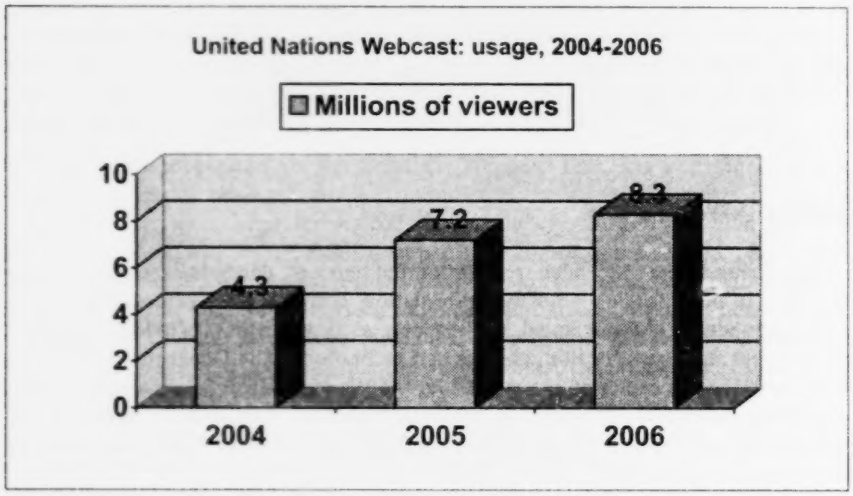
37. The Information Technology Services Division has funded the current search appliance and has also requested funds in the current biennium to replace the appliance to address the requirements of the Secretariat. The possible implementation of indexing the United Nations system is under discussion, but the funding mechanism has not been addressed at this early stage.

38. Discussions with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) will be necessary to fully explore what the approach will be from a funding perspective for the search solution as well as for the enterprise content management system and the United Nations portal to encompass the United Nations system. The hardware in a highly available architecture, the software licences and the resources to coordinate this effort will need to be found.

VIII. Webcasting (Internet broadcasting)

39. United Nations Internet broadcasting (United Nations Webcast) provides the platform and opportunity to a global audience to view, directly from the source, proceedings of United Nations meetings and events of, for example, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council, as well as United Nations conferences, and to follow debates, discussions and decisions on various issues that may affect people worldwide. It

brings awareness and a better understanding of the work of the United Nations as well as the position of Member States on various issues, through live and on-demand video images over the Internet directly to the general public. United Nations webcasting, or Internet broadcasting as it is sometimes referred to, promotes the Organization's core values of transparency and objectivity. The on-demand availability of these webcasts means that anyone, anywhere can watch at their convenience. Over 8.3 million webcast videos — both live and archived — were viewed by users from over 194 countries and territories during 2006. The e-mail alert system for the daily webcast schedule garnered 2,894 new subscribers in 2006, bringing the total number of subscribers to 7,842.



40. The Department has recognized the importance of the United Nations Webcast as a cost-effective communications tool with global outreach and is seeking ways to strengthen webcasting capacity in order to meet the high demand for this service both at Headquarters and at other duty stations such as Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna. In 2006, United Nations Webcast provided live and on-demand coverage of about 2,000 events, including all sessions of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva, as well as the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Nairobi. On 8 December 2006, the Human Rights Council adopted decision 3/104 (see A/HRC/3/L.11), requesting Webcast coverage of all its future sessions on a regular basis. A report is being prepared to address the implications of that request. More requests for webcast coverage of United Nations conferences to be held away from Headquarters are expected in 2007. Furthermore, in order to meet the demands for multilingualism, the Department is exploring ways to expand its webcast services worldwide in the six official languages.

Milestones:
1997: The United Nations Webcast launches pilot project with on-demand audio streaming of United Nations Radio programmes.
2001: Launching of live and on-demand video streaming of meetings and events in English.
2004: Launching of 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week operation of live and on-demand video streaming of programmes.
2005: Addition of original language in webcasts of open United Nations meetings.

IX. Website governance

41. The Department has been reviewing the current decentralized governance mechanism in coordination with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management, to ensure a system that provides coherent organizational strategies for both content and technology. The Department continues to work with the Division and is revitalizing the Working Group on Internet Matters of the Publications Board to develop common technical standards for software and programming, as opposed to guidelines, and intends to make these standards an organizational requirement.

42. Website governance can be significantly improved once a content management system is in place whereby a centralized template ensures organizational branding and lays down specific presentational requirements. In a content management system, since the content is separate from the presentation, the same content can be presented in different formats to match different contexts.

43. A system of governance that will introduce coherence is essential for further development of the website and progress towards language parity, accessibility and organizational branding. It continues to be a challenge to put into place an overall governance scheme for coherent management and governance of the public website that allows differing authoring offices the flexibility and creativity to meet the needs of their particular audiences — be they government officials, the media, academia, civil society or the public at large — while ensuring a unified technical infrastructure, consistency in presentation, organizational branding, addressing accessibility needs, as well as meeting the imperative of producing material in all official languages. There continues to be a need for a robust and secure system that can grow and develop, leading to greater efficiencies in the management of multilingual content.

X. Other issues

44. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/109 B of 8 December 2005, the Web Services Section has been restructured accordingly. Six language units were established to correspond to the six official languages of the United Nations, as per the request from Member States to create separate language units. This increased capacity has improved management of each language site on a continuous basis, as opposed to the previous situation where each language was left without professional coverage for approximately eight weeks of the year as a result of leave schedules, illness or travel. This enhanced capacity, once fully achieved with the completion of the recruitment process expected by mid-2007, will permit an increase in the processing of new pages in languages other than English, more assistance to other departments to render their content in other languages, and more resources for maintenance of existing pages. There has already been increased assistance towards content generation for the News Centre and other new sites, as well as the processing of more material translated pro bono by a number of universities.

45. With the exception of the Spanish language unit, the staffing of the new language units is, however, not yet complete. The remaining posts in the other language units have been announced in the Galaxy System and the recruitment process is under way to fill them. Each of the language units in the Web Services Section now have two professional posts. One of the most challenging tasks has been the recruitment of qualified staff with the technical and language skills required to fill the available vacancies. Given the difficulty of identifying appropriate local support staff, the search has been expanded internationally, but difficulties with visas and travel have made the recruitment process more difficult.

46. The recruitment of junior staff with the appropriate skill sets for web design and programming continues to be a problem. Two P-2 posts in the Web Development Unit could only be filled by temporary staff, since no suitable staff were found as a result of the competitive examination for recruitment to the Professional category of staff members from other categories and the national competitive examinations during the past two years. To address this issue, the Department, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources Management, introduced a special national competitive examination in web development in 2005. The exercise was carried out in 2006, and the roster of successful candidates has been made available to the Department. It is expected that suitable candidates will be found from this roster.

47. The Department continues to supplement staffing resources in the drive to enhance the website. In this regard, the Department wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of France for providing an associate expert to work on the French site. The Department continues to aggressively utilize the services of interns and skilled volunteers in a number of the official languages to complement the work performed by its staff.

48. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 61/121 B, paragraph 68, through increased collaboration, content-providing offices are receiving assistance from the Department in the creation, maintenance and posting of information in the language sites. The Department has been sharing the expertise it has developed over the past 10 years, and assisting other content-providing offices in rendering their English pages into the official languages, on a cost-reimbursable basis. Similar arrangements

continue to be set up with other departments in order to assist them in rendering their content into the other official languages. The Department has also been making its developing expertise in the area of accessibility available to author offices in order to assist them in making their sites accessible. Although content-providing offices are becoming more conscious of the need to create, develop and maintain their specialized sites, the Department continues to encourage them to improve the actions taken in this regard, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution.

49. On a broader scale, the Department, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Global Alliance for Information and Communications Technology, organized and hosted the Third Annual Web for Development Conference at United Nations Headquarters from 20 to 22 November 2006, with the theme "Web-based communication, collaboration and best practices for development". Its purpose was to foster communication, cooperation, and the sharing of best practices in the field of web development with the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. At the same time, the Department contributed to raising awareness of the international community of the importance of the implementation of the outcome document of the World Summit on the Information Society.

50. The first and second Conferences were held in Washington, D.C., in November 2003 and May 2005, respectively. They set the stage for greater cooperation and information sharing among the Web for Development community, who are responsible for managing and directing the major sites of their organizations. The community has since grown to include close to 300 members from over 80 organizations.

51. This latest meeting gathered over 250 participants from the United Nations and its agencies, including participants from other duty stations, Governments, business, industry experts, academia and non-profit and civil society attendees with an interest in the web and information and communications technology for development. A full agenda was prepared, which featured speakers on such topics as: content management systems, web metrics, website evaluation, multilingual websites, Internet broadcasting, accessibility, website governance models, collaboration tools (blogs and wikis), service oriented architecture, open source, and information technology infrastructure.

52. The Department of Public Information continues its efforts to increase the number of pages available in some languages by the use of external pro bono translations provided by academic institutions. A new agreement is in place with Zhejiang University (China). The University of Salamanca (Spain) and Minsk State Linguistic University (Belarus) continue to provide such service. These pro bono materials have increased the pool of available material in the three languages.

XI. Looking ahead

53. There is a necessary trade-off in the allocation of available resources between site development, moving towards parity among languages, compliance with requirements for access by persons with disabilities, content management and site analysis.

54. While awaiting the identification, acquisition and implementation of an enterprise-wide content management system, the Department continued to redesign portions of the United Nations website in 2006, and will progressively incorporate more database-driven features. Increasingly automated processes and easy access to news and latest developments will be introduced, as will be better navigation, presentation, search and accessibility in compliance with the requirements. A complete redesign of the United Nations home page is under way to make the site more user-friendly, intuitive, more personalized and, of course, accessible. Efforts are being made to ensure that there is a thematic rather than a hierarchical approach to the site. The redesign will provide more information to the user with fewer clicks. The United Nations global issues link will feature as one of the navigation paths for the site. The new approach is towards creating engaging web content that provides the visitors with the latest information on the various pages of the site.

55. The scale of the resources required to achieve parity has been presented in earlier reports. With the new resources referred to in the preceding section, the Department continues to strive towards improving parity without sacrificing the comprehensiveness and the up-to-date nature of the site. Additional new pages in all languages are now available at a greater frequency. Special attention is paid to areas showing higher levels of usage. However, the use of some resources to ensure accessibility has affected the pace in moving towards parity.

XII. Conclusions

56. The Department continues to step up the pace of moving towards parity among the official languages on the website, ensure accessibility and better manage the contents of the United Nations website. With the establishment of separate language units, the Department is able to increase the volume of new material going onto the site and the required maintenance and updating, but that capacity has been tempered by new requirements of ensuring access by persons with disabilities.

57. The Department is focusing on key areas, not only with new pages with textual information, but including webcasting, audio, video and photographic materials, all enhancing the multilingual web-accessible nature of the United Nations website. Balancing the need to ensure access and efficiently managing the content, the Department is aiming to continually broaden its outreach to a wider range of audiences in all regions of the world.

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The mandate of the Department of Public Information is to strategically communicate the work and purposes of the United Nations to achieve the greatest public impact. To accomplish this task, the Department has adopted a more strategic approach to its work, focused on setting well-defined communications goals, identifying target audiences, assigning roles to various actors and re-disseminators and establishing ways to measure the impact of its activities. The new communications strategy is built on a closer relationship between the Department and its network of United Nations information centres and the other United Nations departments and offices, the family of United Nations organizations and a global network of over 1,500 civil society organizations.

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 61/121 B, summarizes the key advances made by the Department over the past six months (from July 2006 to February 2007) in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/121 B, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information, which met in January 2007, advised the Department that, in compliance with the current policy of streamlining reporting by the Secretariat, the information requested by the Assembly should be combined and clustered around three thematic areas. Accordingly, the first two reports submitted for the consideration of the Committee at its twenty-ninth session address requests for information on specific areas such as the activities and strategic directions of the network of United Nations information centres (A/AC.198/2007/2) and the United Nations website (A/AC.198/2007/3). The present, third, report covers the overall activities of the Department and provides information on the remaining areas about which the Assembly requested information. In addition, the Assembly, in its resolution 61/235, endorsed a recommendation by the Committee of Programme Coordination[1] requesting the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Committee on Information, on the further development of the knowledge-sharing initiatives of the Secretariat. This information is also contained in the present report.

II. General activities of the Department of Public Information: adopting a strategic approach

3. As a result of changes introduced over the past five years, the Department has adopted a more strategic approach to its work, focusing on setting well-defined communications goals, identifying target audiences, assigning roles to various actors and re-disseminators and finding ways to measure the impact of its activities. This new orientation is built on a closer working relationship with three distinct sets of collaborators: the network of United Nations information centres, other United Nations departments and offices and the family of United Nations organizations and a global network of over 1,500 civil society organizations.

Client orientation

4. The mission of the Department is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. In order to achieve this goal, the Department holds close consultations with some 50 departments and United Nations offices and 26 field missions, which are identified as its "clients". As substantive offices supporting the implementation of United Nations priorities, these clients are responsible for generating the raw material the Department needs for setting

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 16* and corrigendum (A/61/16 and Corr.1), para. 377 (f).

priorities and identifying key messages. The task of the Department, as a body specialized in providing information, is to take that content, repackage it for various target audiences and promote it globally. This is done using traditional means of communication such as print, television and radio, and, increasingly, through the use of new information and communications technology. This integrated approach is best illustrated in the successful implementation of communications campaigns on priority themes (see sect. III below).

United Nations Communications Group

5. The Department serves as the secretariat of the United Nations Communications Group, which was established in 2002 and now includes 41 offices from throughout the entire United Nations system of organizations. The Group, through its regular brainstorming meetings at United Nations Headquarters, issue-based task forces and annual sessions of heads of public information bodies, continues to coordinate the United Nations system's overall activities in the area of public information and communications. For example, the group has set up a task force on avian flu to craft communications and to coordinate the role of United Nations system participants. Similarly, United Nations system partners are working together on a common communications approach to climate change. A task force on sport for peace and development, which includes 25 United Nations programmes and agencies, has developed a business plan for the 2007-2009 period, providing a framework for implementation of the United Nations Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace, as presented in the report of the Secretary-General.[2]

6. At the fifth annual meeting of the United Nations Communications Group, held in Vienna on 28 and 29 June 2006, it was stressed that while it was important for United Nations system partners to work together and speak with the same voice, it was equally important to recognize that each United Nations organization had its own expertise and priorities. The members agreed that the Communications Group remained the most effective platform for advancing the common agenda of the United Nations system.

Publicizing the activities of the General Assembly

7. Following the adoption in 2004 of a communications strategy to better publicize the work and decisions of the General Assembly,[3] the Department continued to pursue additional ways to fulfil this task. Working with the staff and the spokeswoman for the President of the General Assembly, the Department collaborated on an information programme for the debate of the Assembly of 27 November 2006 on the Millennium Development Goals. It was a two-pronged effort: press materials on the Goals from over the course of the last year were provided for reference purposes to the President's team, while the Department drafted and distributed approved press materials and statements by Member States in the Assembly. A press conference was organized for the President of the General Assembly and a senior official of the Islamic Development Bank, who announced a major financial contribution for implementing the Goals. Collaboration with the Office of the President of the Assembly also extended to one of the outstanding United Nations events of the year, the successful conclusion of four years of

[2] A/61/373.

[3] A/AC.198/2004/6.

negotiations on the draft Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. With support from the Department on content and timing, the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly addressed an enthusiastic crowd at the conclusion of the negotiations late in the night of 25 August 2006.

8. The President of the General Assembly also addressed two events organized by the Department in 2006 that were attended by students: the International Day of Peace; and Human Rights Day. Using multiple technologies, both events were video-linked and webcast, connecting hundreds of students, non-governmental organizations, teachers and distinguished guests at United Nations Headquarters with others at several global sites.

9. The *UN Chronicle* provided in-depth coverage of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in both its print and online editions. Issue 3, 2006 of the print edition devoted its cover, "Bringing the UN Forward", and its cover story, "An Uneven Past", to the three women who have served as Presidents of the General Assembly, including an exclusive interview with the President of the sixty-first session. The Department also conducted a briefing for non-governmental organizations by the spokeswoman for the President of the General Assembly on the session's general debate. Activities of the Assembly and its President were also featured in several publications by United Nations information centres.

Coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

10. The Spokesperson's Office works closely with the Department to share information and ensure consistency in the messages communicated by the Organization. Each morning the strategic communications meeting brings together the Spokesperson and the Deputy Spokesperson with senior officials of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department to discuss the communications aspects of the most pressing issues of the day and to provide guidance to the Spokesperson for the noon briefing. The Spokesperson's Office then holds its planning meeting for the daily noon briefing with operational staff from United Nations Radio, the United Nations News Service and other colleagues in the Department as well as with the spokesperson of the President of the General Assembly. A preview of the noon briefing is shared with the Department. Throughout the day, the Spokesperson's Office works hand-in-hand with staff of the Department to ensure the most efficient and effective media coverage of United Nations affairs. Staff of the United Nations information centres work closely in support of the Spokesperson's Office during the Secretary-General's official visits to countries where they are located.

Multilingualism

11. The report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism,[4] submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/309, provides a comprehensive assessment of multilingualism in the Secretariat and highlights the role of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information as the Coordinator for multilingualism. The United Nations information centres play a very important role in promoting multilingual communications by the Secretariat, ensuring effective

[4] A/61/317.

distribution of United Nations documentation and wide dissemination of its work. Human resources remain the key to the success of effective multilingualism within the Secretariat. Various measures are analysed in the report, in particular the language training programme, training in general and recruitment for peacekeeping operations. A number of recommendations are also presented.

A culture of evaluation

12. With the successful completion of a three-year pilot project carried out in conjunction with the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Department has now integrated the systematic evaluation of its activities and products at all levels. Over the past year, in an effort to further expand and improve its outreach to young people, the Department focused on soliciting feedback from educators and students on its various products and activities. A survey of teachers found that they consider the United Nations to be a very authoritative source for information on global issues. Overall, 95 per cent stated that having the United Nations as a producer of an educational product played an important role in their decision to incorporate it in their lesson plans. In particular, 44 per cent believed that United Nations materials were useful for teaching students about specific global issues and 41 per cent stated that their primary usage of United Nations educational materials was to sensitize students to other cultures and experiences.

III. Thematic communications campaigns

High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

13. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development of the General Assembly, held on 14 and 15 September 2006, provided an opportunity to focus on the increasingly important issue of migration and development. To publicize the event and introduce the issues to the public, the Department produced a 10-part press kit incorporating newly available statistics and policy analysis of the United Nations Secretariat. The kit included seven separate fact sheets, each covering a region or important subregion. Media coverage worldwide was not only ample in quantity, but objective and thoughtful in tone.

Box 1

Media coverage of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held on 14 and 15 September 2006, was generated, inter alia, by: the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service, National Public Radio, Reuters, the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Jakarta Post*, *Prensa Latina* and the *Hindustan Times*. Key messages on the role of migration framed by the Department were picked up in over 90 per cent of media coverage. Moreover, only about 1 per cent of the coverage took an overtly negative tack; the remainder was either positive or objective in tone.

World Summit on the Information Society

14. The first World Information Society Day, 17 May 2006, was the kick-off point for a campaign reaching into 2007 to bring global attention to the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in November 2005, and to raise awareness of the advantages that the Internet and other technologies bring to development. Colourful web pages transmitted these messages worldwide in six languages, and the event was marked with celebrations around the globe (one attracting 10,000 celebrants), winning the event the informal title in the media of "World Internet Day". A fact sheet, prepared by the Department for the board meeting of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development on 27 September 2006, discussed prospects for closing the digital divide. This fact sheet, which charted the speed with which the information revolution is taking place in the developing world, as well as the gap that still remains, was used by the Executive Coordinator of the Global Alliance on a worldwide speaking tour.

15. The Department also brought attention to one of the main outcomes of the Tunis Summit, the Internet Governance Forum, and the holding of its first session in Athens from 30 October to 2 November 2006, which the Department attended in order to carry out media outreach.

Box 2

Major news outlets that covered the Internet Governance Forum included Agence France Presse, EFE, the leading Spanish news agency, Radio France Internationale, Kyodo News, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Observer* (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), *Le Monde*, *El Pais*, *La Stampa* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

"Delivering as One"

16. In its effort to generate maximum media coverage of the launch of "Delivering as One", the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment,[5] the Department of Public Information adopted a two-tier system of messaging, one for the spokespersons of the Panel and another for United Nations spokespersons and Directors of United Nations information centres. Press products and activities included an in-depth question and answer session, providing forthright answers to critical questions as background guidance for the Directors of information centres as well as Panel members, a press kit with a signature "Delivering as One" design, an advance embargoed background briefing by the executive director of the Panel secretariat and a press conference by Panel members for the launch of the report.

[5] A/61/583.

Box 3

Key media coverage of the launch of the report was provided by: the BBC World Service (two television stories), BBC Online, the *International Herald Tribune*, CNN Español, *The Washington Times*, CBS News, *Forbes* Magazine, the *Ottawa Citizen*, *The Scotsman*, *The Norway Post*, *The Guardian*, the *Toronto Star*, Voice of America, the *Hindustan Times*, the *Mail & Guardian*, allAfrica.com. Singapore's Channel NewsAsia, and Pakistan's biggest English-language newspaper, *Dawn*, along with the *Pakistan Times* and the *Business Recorder*.

The question of Palestine

17. The Department continued to implement the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine by training nine Palestinian journalists (five women and four men) in November and December 2006. The programme included a week-long academic training at the graduate level at Columbia University and training in website development at Headquarters. All participants expressed satisfaction with the programme and urged that it be continued.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

18. The Department continued to promote the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa's blueprint for development, and to emphasize United Nations support for its implementation. In October 2006, the Department organized a press conference for the Special Adviser on Africa to help publicize and explain the findings and recommendations contained in the fourth consolidated report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of and international support for NEPAD, which generated articles in the Associated Press, *The Washington Post* and the London *Guardian*, among other outlets. Stories on the goals, challenges and achievements of NEPAD also appeared regularly in the Department's quarterly magazine, *Africa Renewal/Afrique Renouveau*, 35,000 copies of which are printed and disseminated worldwide. The stories, presented as part of a new series, "NEPAD in Action", also appeared on the magazine's website (http://www.un.org/AR).

"The Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations"

19. The Department continued to promote awareness of the need to prevent genocide and assist genocide survivors, as part of the two-year (2006-2007) "The Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations" outreach programme (mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/225). Following a round-table discussion at the United Nations on the twelfth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide in April and an event focusing on sexual violence against women in the Great Lakes region in May 2006, the Department launched other outreach efforts. It worked with a civil society organization to prepare a photo and text exhibit to promote awareness of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, actions to help prevent future genocides and the needs of women survivors of rape during genocide. The Department has also created and is finalizing a website, prepared background papers for distribution to civil society

groups and obtained the agreement of a number of film producers to make their films on this subject available for showings in Africa and elsewhere.

Alliance of Civilizations

20. The launch of the "Alliance of Civilizations" report of the High-level Group in November 2006 was marked by a press briefing at Headquarters and press materials and guidance for United Nations information centres to promote the event locally. Interviews with members of the Group were recorded in Istanbul by UN Television and disseminated via UNifeed to Associated Press Television News and Reuters.

Box 4

English coverage of the "Alliance of Civilizations" report in the Middle East was provided, inter alia, by *Al Jazeera*, *The Peninsula* (Qatar), the *Middle East Times*, the *Daily Times* (Pakistan) and the *Tehran Times*. The BBC World Service also provided significant coverage.

Violence against children

21. For the launch of the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/61/299) in October 2006, the Department provided communications support to the study secretariat, including media outreach to correspondents at Headquarters, and mobilized the network of United Nations information centres to conduct media outreach locally. Two op-ed pieces (one by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and one by the independent expert for the study), targeted at different regions, were successfully placed by the information centres in 26 publications in 20 countries. The Department also assisted in the organization of a press conference at Headquarters.

Box 5

The report on violence against children was widely covered in all regions, with articles featuring the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner and/or the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights appearing in *The Independent* (London), *The New York Times*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Irish Examiner*, *The Age* (Australia), Canadian Television (CTV) and *Prothom Alo* (Bangladesh).

Millennium Development Goals

22. To raise awareness of the Millennium Development Goals and to create momentum for their achievement, the Department worked with the Millennium Campaign office in organizing the "Stand Up against Poverty, Stand Up for the Millennium Development Goals" event, which was held on 16 October 2006 at Headquarters. The United Nations information centres carried out numerous "Stand Up" events in many countries. The Department also acted as coordinator for the

event and also for the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, held at United Nations Headquarters on 17 October 2006.

Box 6

The "Stand Up" event succeeded in mobilizing the participation of over 23 million people worldwide, making it the largest event ever organized for a Guinness World Record.

IV. Role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping

23. With the recent surge in demand for United Nations peacekeeping, the work of the Department in the area of peacekeeping and the level of its cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have greatly expanded. One situation being given heightened attention is the crisis in Darfur. In addition to working closely with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and the African Union on communications strategies, the Department also undertook the work of identifying and recruiting the public information staff who are being deployed to Darfur, as well as developing their operational plans and tasks. On a more global level, the Department continued to produce regular internal guidance on developments regarding United Nations involvement in Darfur. The Department has also been playing an important role in the planning of possible missions in Chad and the Central African Republic by participating in the development of an operational plan and public information strategy and by identifying and lining up rapid deployment staff for the advance team.

24. In 2006, coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was further consolidated by the creation of a joint public information working group, which now meets on a daily basis. The focus of the group's work is on developing an overall strategy to increase awareness of the achievements and challenges of United Nations peacekeeping and on the further development of internal communications promoting pride of purpose in the Organization's peacekeeping efforts. Challenges in identifying and recruiting key public information staff at the senior level and increasing the roster, in particular of Arabic and French-speaking public information staff, are also issues on which the group is focusing.

25. The Department played an active part in creating a media strategy for and organizing coverage of the High-level Conference on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations and non-governmental organizations Personnel on 4 December 2006. The Department also played an advisory role in assisting the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the missions in responding to media reports of sexual exploitation and abuse involving United Nations peacekeeping personnel and in helping public information offices at the missions to use the standard operating procedures on communications and sexual exploitation and abuse jointly developed by the Department and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

26. Other activities of the Department during this period include:

(a) Participation in the technical assessment mission to Nepal and the development of a plan and a communications strategy to launch the public information dimension of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN);

(b) Production of the first magazine on United Nations police in November 2006;

(c) Continuous updating of a wide range of statistics on peacekeeping deployment;

(d) Issuance of the *United Nations Peace Operations: Year in Review 2006*;

(e) Initiating videoconferences between the Department, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and mission public information components to find mutual solutions to communications challenges and to increase coverage of each mission;

(f) Coordination with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Strategic Military Cell of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on developing communications plans and civilian-military public information capacity.

27. In the run-up to the historic elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July and November 2006, the Department created a communications strategy in tandem with the public information strategy of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Other landmark developments, such as the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) on 31 December 2006, were highlighted by the Department through its information outlets. In addition, the Department also organized a travelling photo exhibit of the Mission's work, inaugurated at Headquarters in January 2007 and replicated on the web.

Box 7

The Economist (United Kingdom), in a lead story in January 2007, featured United Nations peacekeepers on its cover and highlighted the success of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in overseeing the country's transition to free elections after decades of war. "But", the weekly added, "that is just one of 18 different missions, in which about 100,000 United Nations peacekeepers are deployed".

V. News services

New technology

28. The Department is leveraging the Internet and digital technology to provide enhanced and more integrated access to all its news products. The present News Centre, audio/visual and press release sites and their underlying production platforms are being revamped to provide a user-friendly gateway (including access for users with disabilities) to the wealth of news material produced on a daily basis.

Many of the revised pages will build user communities through user registration, surveys, polls, e-mail alerts and user feedback forms. Once the full package of pages is deployed, new functionalities will be offered.

29. In the audio/visual area, the phased introduction of new web pages is already automating many traditional functions. Users wishing to access United Nations photos can now conduct online research, download searchable photos, enter requests and have a personal history of all high-resolution photo requests, thereby saving staff time allocated to these functions. Also, in order to reduce the staff time taken to answer questions, an expanded "frequently asked questions" section anticipates and addresses common user inquiries. The radio pages, which will have a common organization for all language units while at the same time retaining the individuality of each unit, are being adapted to facilitate continuous updating of audio files and will be integrated seamlessly with an online audio library. The television pages will also be developed along the lines of the photo and radio pages. The new UNifeed page will be an important innovation, and its integration with the production hub will ultimately facilitate the distribution of searchable broadcast quality video.

30. Modernization of audio/visual production systems also continues. Much progress has been achieved with the "RadioMan" radio module, which was introduced in 2004. RadioMan is an online audio editing system with a database that permits the retrieval of audio for editing as live recording is under way. When the system is fully implemented with the on-air playback module, workflow in radio production and dissemination, as well as archiving, will be significantly streamlined. Web publishing will be automated and the benefit of having audio clips pre-positioned in the play list will permit the Department to update its daily radio news programmes more often and more easily.

31. To provide more resilience to the networked interactive content access (NICA) system, an IBM tool that provides the database for United Nations photos, the Department is working closely with the Information Technology Services Division to migrate the system to the United Nations standard Linux operating system this year. The Department is now posting high resolution photos on the web, and using the NICA system, entire photo galleries may now be posted easily to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management monitors throughout the United Nations complex.

Box 8

Three large plasma monitors will soon be placed in strategic locations in the United Nations Headquarters complex to display United Nations news and thematic photos.

Radio

32. In its ongoing efforts to bring the core messages of the Organization to the widest possible global audience, United Nations Radio has continued to expand and strengthen its partnerships with a broad range of local, national and regional broadcasters, increasing the number of such partners from 190 in June 2006 to 201 in February 2007, including: Radio Nacional del Perú; Rádio Guaíba and Jovem

Pan, Brazil; Real FM Radio of Grenada; Radio Citadelle, Radio Vénus and Radio Etense, Haiti; Radio Choice FM, Ghana; Voice of Maldives; and the trend news agency in Azerbaijan. The Department is currently negotiating partnership agreements with outlets in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, which will significantly extend its outreach to that part of the world.

33. United Nations Radio programmes are now also available via the web to a number of media entities, including the World Radio Network, the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development and Université Radiophonique et Télévisuelle Internationale, which offer United Nations Radio programmes to a variety of radio stations.

34. In the past two years, United Nations Radio has vastly increased its audience in North America and Europe. Two producers, supported by the United Nations Foundation, offer short United Nations news reports and sound bites to radio stations over the web. Many stations and networks in the United States of America, including the 1,600-station Clear Channel group, air the material regularly, and the European Broadcasting Union disseminates this material to 79 national broadcasters.

35. The reach of United Nations Radio has also expanded in the francophone world. The Department recently began targeted distribution of United Nations Radio programmes in French to 200 private, commercial and community radio stations in Africa, using the World Space Afristar satellite and the Radio France Internationale network of stations, which access the programmes via its download service.

36. The nature of United Nations Radio's partnerships has become more dynamic. Radio Shanghai not only broadcasts United Nations Radio reports, it also sends information about the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies. Similar arrangements have been worked out with other partners, including Deutsche Welle and the Voice of Russia. Interactivity with audiences has also increased, providing valuable feedback.

Box 9

The United Nations Radio Chinese-language unit contributes a variety of United Nations-related issues to KWRM-AM, a California radio station that broadcasts a one-hour monthly live talk show targeting the local Chinese-speaking audience.

37. United Nations Radio continues to produce a 15-minute daily news and features programme in every official language. In addition, each language unit produces supplemental material such as weekly magazine programmes. The English-language unit produces the greatest number of these in order to serve regional audiences in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The Department continues to produce programmes in several non-official languages, including Portuguese and Kiswahili.

Box 10

"According to my experience, United Nations Radio plays a crucial role in providing objective and accurate information, which is much needed in our world today. This information is also important as it is focused on people and populations. The United Nations has a mandate to look after the world ... United Nations Radio helps it substantially by playing this role".

Dr. Fernando Henrique Cardozo, former President of Brazil in an e-mail message to the Department of Public Information.

Television

38. United Nations Television provides coverage of events at United Nations Headquarters that is accessed directly by the international broadcasting syndicators, Associated Press Television News and Reuters Television, as well as by a number of large broadcasting organizations, including ABC, Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera, BBC, CBS, CCTV, CNN, the European Broadcasting Union, FOX News, NBC and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Other broadcasting organizations, including German and Japanese media, receive the signal indirectly. Particularly significant has been the growth of UNifeed, the United Nations Television satellite feed. This service, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), provides hundreds of broadcasters with video of three to four stories a day six-days-a week, some from Headquarters, some from the field, including from peacekeeping and other field missions.

Box 11

Since 1 May 2006, the Department has been tracking the usage of its videos. Of the stations that are monitored (which does not include all stations that receive video feed), results show that, by early February 2007, at least 558 stations and networks have used the UNifeed service.

39. The launch of the new monthly television magazine programme, *21st Century*, has provided a great opportunity to expand United Nations Television's global audience. The programme includes high-quality human interest stories, easily adaptable to language versions, reflecting some of the most important global issues in which the United Nations family is engaged. The programme is carried by a number of broadcasting companies, including: Al Jazeera English, CCTV, Bhutan Broadcasting Service, DK4 (Denmark), France 24, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, SABC Africa, Radio televisión Española, Viet Nam Television and the Africa Channel, with many other stations also showing interest in the new format. Meanwhile, production continues on other products, including the award-winning *UN in Action* series.

Archives

40. The challenges of preserving and organizing United Nations audio/visual archives have become even more pressing with the impending commencement of the capital master plan to renovate United Nations Headquarters, during which time the archives must be relocated. Several steps are being taken to address this urgent matter: a core list of historical moving images is being prepared with a view to safeguarding this key collection in a suitable storage environment; a comprehensive selection of the Department's legacy photo records is being fed into the networked interactive content access (NICA) system; and the Department is playing an active role in an inter-organization group on archives at risk, which is concerned with safeguarding the world's premier audio/visual archives. An agreement has already been reached with the group to digitize selected materials showcasing United Nations milestones, which will be used to attract partners with expertise and resources to fully digitize the Organization's audio/visual archives.

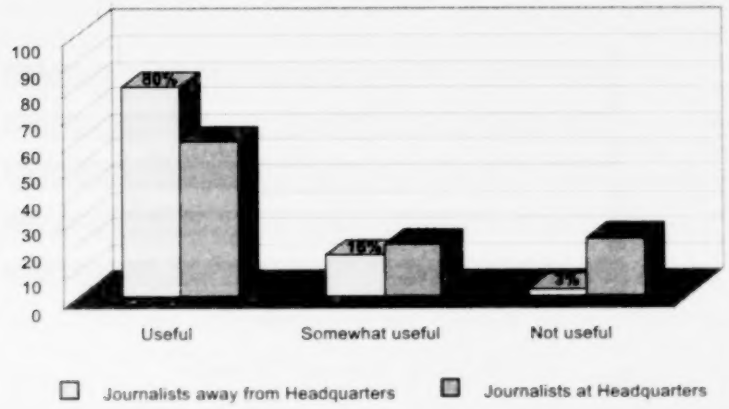
Press releases

41. In the year since the introduction of the new press release web page, launched in early 2006, Security Council and General Assembly statements continue to be posted on the Internet in batches in order to provide media and other clients with the materials they need well in advance of the issuance of the final press releases at the completion of official meetings. Efforts are currently under way to extend this service, on an as-possible basis, to selected meetings of the main subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Timely issuance of press releases has improved, with an increase from 70 to 80 per cent of the releases available within two hours after the end of a meeting. The Department makes every effort to harmonize coverage of all open meetings in the two working languages, English and French. While differences in style may sometimes occur, accuracy and objectivity remain the cornerstone in preparing press release summaries. Furthermore, as illustrated in figure 1, a combination of recent surveys and media analyses found that a majority both of journalists in the field and those accredited at Headquarters found press releases to be useful for their work.

News Centre

42. With its key focus on the provision of accurate and impartial coverage of breaking news about a wide range of United Nations activities, as well as easy access to related resources, the United Nations News Centre on the Organization's website continues to gain popularity among diverse audiences around the world. Traffic to the United Nations main news portal in all official languages has shown a steady increase, with the number of unique visits to the English site having grown from some 650,000 in December 2005 to nearly 997,000 in the same month of 2006. The site's e-mail service (in French and English) gained more than 3,000 new subscribers in 2006, along with increased use of the newly launched really simple syndication feeds service, which has facilitated access to the latest headlines from the United Nations News Centre for a variety of websites, personal web pages and individual users.

Figure 1
Usefulness of United Nations press releases for journalists
(Percentage of respondents)



VI. Outreach services

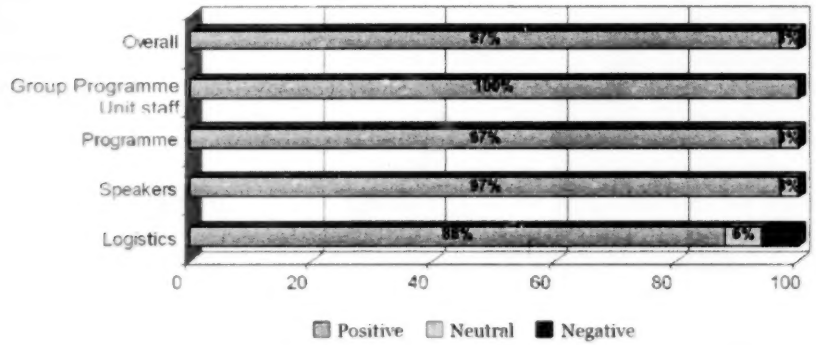
Guided tours

43. The Department continued to reach out to global audiences using innovative and less traditional means of communication, such as art exhibits, academic websites and seminars. In 2006, the number of people taking the guided tour rose to its highest level since 2000, to nearly 450,000, reflecting the rising trend of tourism in New York City. The guides adapt their tour narrative on a daily basis to reflect what is currently being considered by United Nations bodies and recent developments, and tailor their comments to better respond to the interests of their audience on any given tour.

Briefing programmes

44. In 2006, the Department continued to arrange in-house briefings, videoconferences and outside speaking engagements, reaching well over 40,000 individuals. Most of these briefings are organized in response to requests from educational institutions and teachers at the high school, undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as from non-governmental and civil society organizations. In a survey conducted in 2006, group leaders expressed a high rate of satisfaction (97 per cent) with regard to the services provided to them through the Speakers Bureau (see figure 2).

Figure 2
Ratings of the briefings programme
(Percentage of respondents)



Exhibits and special events

45. The nearly 1 million visitors who pass through the public lobby every year have free access to the major exhibits and displays organized by the Department, which numbered 15 in the last six months alone. An exhibition of cartoons from around the world was linked to the "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar on the role and responsibility of cartoonists in that endeavour. Other exhibitions dealt with the meeting of fourteenth century civilizations and was organized in the context of the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, together with a concert in the General Assembly Hall, which also paid tribute to outgoing Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Two other major exhibits flowing from Assembly mandates were those launched in January 2007 on the Holocaust against the Roma and Sinti, as well as one featuring the art of Holocaust survivors. A third was the exhibit commemorating the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, scheduled to begin in March 2007.

The capital master plan and the group programmes of the Department of Public Information

46. The outreach activities of guided tours, the organized group programmes and the United Nations bookshop will be drastically affected during the closure of the General Assembly Building during the renovation of the Headquarters complex, scheduled to take place between June 2008 and February 2011, since under the capital master plan, there will be no access for the general public or large groups to the Headquarters site. At the time of the writing of the present report, no provisions for the continuation of these services had been made, although alternative sites are being explored.

Outreach programme on the Holocaust and the United Nations

47. Since the establishment of the outreach programme on the Holocaust in January 2006, the Department has developed a truly international network of civil society groups, collaborating with world-renowned institutions and garnering the support of experts in the field of Holocaust and genocide studies. Through its film

series, briefings, discussion papers and innovative online information products, the key to the programme's success has been partnership. To that end, the Department has joined the working groups on Holocaust remembrance days and genocide prevention of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. In January 2007, the Department organized a number of activities during Holocaust Remembrance Week, including: the annual observance, with a focus on the importance of education in ending discrimination; the screening of two films, "I Only Wanted to Live" and "Spell Your Name", co-sponsored by the Governments of Italy and Ukraine; and the launch of the Department's third discussion paper on the Holocaust. Distributed worldwide, these papers promote tolerance as a way to stop the spread of hatred that can lead to ethnic and religious violence. To facilitate the development of educational curricula by Member States, the Department, in partnership with Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, the Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education at the University of Southern California and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, launched a new online educational tool entitled, "Electronic notes for speakers", in English and French. One teacher said that this product made her job easier by combining visual testimony with factual information on the victims of the Holocaust.

Box 12

"We recommend that you use it in future events — it really helps [the teacher] make a point by putting faces and stories together with numbers."

Comment from a teacher who has used the "Electronic notes for speakers".

The Department also produced and distributed a DVD and other informational materials to the United Nations information centres and non-governmental organizations to assist them in organizing Holocaust remembrance days. A permanent exhibit at Headquarters is being developed. More details on the Department's activities are available in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of outreach on the "Holocaust and the United Nations" (A/60/882).

Outreach to the academic community

48. Through its Academic Initiative Section, the Department continues to promote awareness of the role and work of the United Nations on priority issues and to inform and influence the public through academia and civil society organizations. With the help of its two flagship publications, the *UN Chronicle* and the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, as well as through its academic partnership programmes, the Department engages the worldwide public in dialogue on issues being dealt with by the Organization. During the reporting period, the fifty-eighth volume of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, covering events in 2004, was published.

49. A thorough evaluation of the *UN Chronicle* has determined that putting the journal online in all languages, beginning in 2007, and reorienting it more towards scholars and senior students will help increase its readership in all languages and

assist in the outreach efforts of the Department to the academic community and to the general public around the world. In November 2006, a focus group of academics and diplomats met to discuss and make recommendations on the thrust of the new academic initiative and the format and content of the *UN Chronicle*. Those recommendations are being taken into account in the re-orientation of the journal.

Box 13

Page views of the English and French online versions of the *UN Chronicle* totalled 1,716,310 from February 2006 to January 2007.

50. Working within the overall framework of its global agenda, the Department has continued to examine manifestations of intolerance, exploring ways to promote respect and understanding among peoples and ways in which education can help overcome intolerance. Particularly notable during this reporting period is the fifth "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar, entitled "Cartooning for peace: the responsibility of political cartoonists?", held on 16 October 2006.

Publishing activities

51. The Department, through its Sales and Marketing Section, continues to extend the reach of the publishing activities of the United Nations and its agencies through its offices and bookshops in Geneva and New York, via 90 sales agents in 61 countries and, continuously, via its e-commerce driven website. The website is adding more than 200 new customers every month and currently features over 5,300 books and related products. Online sales from July 2006 through January 2007 increased by 33 per cent compared to the same period one year earlier.

52. United Nations bookshops continue to serve delegates, staff and visitors in New York and Geneva. A second location has been added at the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Pregny Gate, providing another outlet for sales and greater convenience for the community. Sales at the United Nations bookshop in New York increased by 15 per cent from July 2006 to January 2007, compared to the same period one year earlier. In an arrangement with UNDP, the Sales and Marketing Section provided logistical and distribution services for the 2006 edition of the *Human Development Report*, with the result that over 47,000 copies of the report were distributed to 145 UNDP offices worldwide.

53. In addition, *United Nations Development Business*, a print and online procurement publication of the Sales and Marketing Section, issued more than 3,000 procurement notices during the current reporting period, working with 15 agencies (including all the major multilateral development banks) and reaching more than 200 subscribers in over 100 countries.

The Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations

54. The Department is continuously looking for ways to make its programmes and conferences more interesting and relevant. At the fifty-ninth annual DPI/NGO Conference (6-8 September 2006), entitled "Unfinished business: effective partnerships for human security and sustainable development", speakers were

requested not to discuss theories and ideologies but rather to provide specific examples of projects, which, if emulated by others, could help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Numerous projects and best practices were highlighted at the conference, including: the Millennium Villages Project, designed to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development in rural communities; and a project sponsored by MTV that uses music videos to teach young people about HIV and AIDS. In addition, for the first time, a DVD-Rom was included with the final report, containing the archived webcasts of the entire conference.

55. The Department continues to expand the geographical representation of non-governmental organizations associated with it. Among the 28 newly associated non-governmental organizations there were four from Africa, one from Latin America, one from the Commonwealth of Independent States and four from the Asia and Pacific region.

Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme

56. In 2006, 15 young journalists (6 from television media, 6 from print and 3 from radio) participated in the six-week Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme, a training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and economies in transition. Ten of the participants were women. One of the innovations introduced in 2006 was briefings given by the chairman of the regional groups of the General Assembly. In their evaluation of the programme, the journalists found the two-day training at Columbia University, which included an advanced skills workshop in Internet journalism, especially productive for their professional development. As of 2006, approximately 378 broadcasters and journalists from more than 160 countries have taken part in the programme.

Box 14

"Before, I had this impression of a United Nations that was out of touch with 'normalcy' and small countries like mine, but through the briefings I have come to appreciate more all the efforts that the United Nations is putting into making this world a better place."

Written comment by a participant in the Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme.

Messengers of Peace

57. On the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2006, the Secretary-General appointed world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma as the tenth United Nations Messenger of Peace. On the same day, five Messengers of Peace, Michael Douglas, Vijay Amritraj, Jane Goodall, Anna Cataldi and Mr. Ma, participated in a videoconference with more than 600 students at United Nations Headquarters and at three peacekeeping missions in Kosovo, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 14 September 2006, Messenger of Peace Elie Wiesel and George Clooney participated in a highly publicized meeting of the Security Council on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Two United Nations public service announcements, on

the illicit trade in small arms and the International Year of Microcredit, featuring Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas, were shown to large audiences at a United Nations film festival organized by the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in December 2006. Mr. Douglas was featured in another public service announcement to promote a six-part United Nations Television series, entitled "A Dollar a Day", which focuses on poverty and the broader Millennium Development Goals. Messenger of Peace Anna Cataldi spearheaded the development of a photographic exhibition and the creation of a DVD and public service announcement to raise global awareness about the dangers of tuberculosis. The project, to be launched at United Nations Headquarters in observance of World Tuberculosis Day 2007 (24 March), has been developed by the Department in close cooperation with the Stop TB Department of the World Health Organization (WHO).

58. A website for the Messengers of Peace has been designed, with profiles of the prominent personalities appointed by the Secretary-General and an overview of all their outreach activities on behalf of the United Nations.

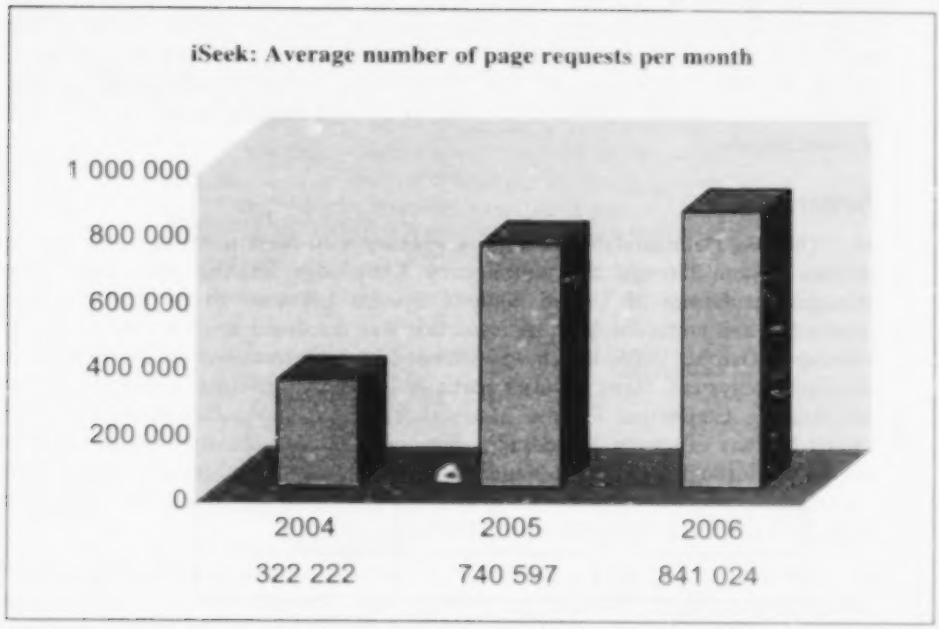
VII. Knowledge sharing and library services

Knowledge-sharing initiative

59. Over the last two years, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge-Sharing Centre has developed three specific knowledge-sharing activities: the enhancement of the United Nations Intranet, iSeek; the setting up of a personal knowledge-management service; and the launching of a series of lectures and conversations. The report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of knowledge-management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration (E/AC.51/2006/2), contains a recommendation recognizing the role the Library plays in leading the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing.

60. As a first step in developing a strategy on knowledge management for the Secretariat, as was recommended in the above-mentioned report, an internal communications strategy, focusing on the use of iSeek, was prepared in coordination with the internal communications working group. After approximately two years of progressive enhancement, staff are consulting iSeek with increased regularity to locate information and share stories and experience. Staff in all duty stations, United Nations information centres and peacekeeping missions participated in a needs assessment survey on iSeek conducted in the last quarter of 2006. Almost 2,000 staff responded, providing valuable data to evaluate the impact of the site. Nearly two thirds of all respondents stated that they were "overall very satisfied" or "satisfied" with iSeek. When asked about improvements or tools they would like to have access to on iSeek, respondents overwhelmingly quoted "search", "document management tools" and "desktop videoconferencing" as their top choices. Portal technology, which is planned as part of the United Nations global information and communications technology (ICT) strategy, will help improve the ease of linking to currently discrete databases, management tools and applications and other information resources, although considerable work needs to be done to find better and more coherent ways of managing the Organization's information and substantive content.

Figure 3



61. Through another knowledge-sharing initiative, personal knowledge management, coaching and consulting services are provided to staff and delegations to assist them in learning techniques for managing information more effectively. Technical briefing notes, called "knowledge pointers", which were developed to support this new service, give tips on using software applications, managing e-mail archives and searching the Internet as well as a range of other information handling topics. The knowledge pointers are also used as training guides in courses and coaching sessions, and pointers on the core work of the United Nations are electronically accessible through iSeek.

62. With a view to providing an open forum for staff and delegations to discuss the core work of the United Nations, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Lectures and Conversations Series, supported by the Government of Sweden, was launched in 2005 during the Dag Hammarskjöld centenary. Over the last year, events covered the following issues: the role of the international civil servant; understanding knowledge management; and enterprise search and content management. In addition, the screening of a documentary on Dag Hammarskjöld's tenure as Secretary-General was organized. The theme for the series for 2007 is "Managing change".

Research services and training

63. In response to the increasing availability of online information, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has developed new training courses on identifying, evaluating and making efficient use of the high-quality online tools and databases maintained by the Library, subscription databases and publicly available websites. Over 100 training sessions were held in 2006, at which the number of attendees

increased by 24 per cent over the previous year. Introductory research courses and online informational products (for example, United Nations Pulse or the United Nations Research Guide) remain popular, especially with new staff of the Secretariat and the Permanent Missions, owing in part to the complexity and uniqueness of United Nations documentation. The Library also provides customized training sessions for specialized audiences in conjunction with ongoing issues on the United Nations agenda.

Partnerships

64. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is working with other libraries in the United Nations system through the inter-agency Knowledge Sharing and Information Management Group of United Nations System Libraries to identify common approaches and methodologies, an issue that was discussed at its annual three-day meeting in October 2006, which was attended by representatives of 20 libraries in the common system. Many libraries participating in this informal group are part of the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries. In addition, close collaboration among these libraries is carried out through the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium, which continues to negotiate significant discounts on electronic resources for United Nations system libraries.

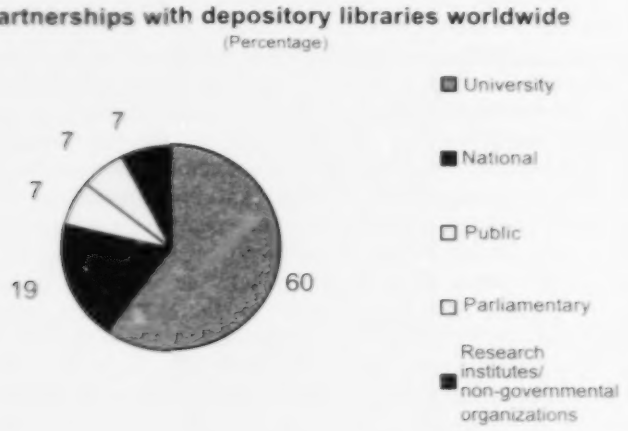
65. Libraries participating in the Steering Committee are working together on new activities to promote knowledge sharing and strengthened coordination and cooperation among United Nations libraries. Discussions at an annual meeting, which was held in October 2006 by videoconference, focused on activities in support of the new strategic directions for United Nations libraries outlined in previous reports to the Committee on Information (see A/AC.198/2005/4 and A/AC.198/2006/2). The Steering Committee's agenda is project-driven and focuses on achieving concrete outputs covering, inter alia, the management of United Nations documentation; information skills and learning; electronic resources and the use of the Web; and knowledge sharing. As a result of this collaboration, the above-mentioned knowledge pointers were produced with the support of the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva in order to assist library clients and staff throughout the Secretariat to understand how to use the technological tools already available on their desktops.

Depository libraries

66. Partnerships with the network of depository libraries worldwide (406 depository libraries in 145 countries) are being further developed. This network includes university, national, public, parliamentary, research and non-governmental organizations libraries (see figure 4). Increasingly, depository libraries access United Nations documents electronically through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), which is available on the Internet. This trend has required a shift in focus to providing technical support and training to depository libraries in learning how to access electronic information. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continues its effort to assist and support depository libraries, especially in developing countries, in their transition from traditional document repository libraries into libraries and knowledge-sharing centres for the twenty-first century and has actively sought external funding for training events and workshops. Regional workshops as part of this outreach initiative include one for Spanish-

speaking librarians in the Caribbean region, through a partnership with the United Nations Association in the Dominican Republic, with financial support from the Government of the country (January 2007) and another for depository librarians in Asia organized in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to be held in Bangkok in the second half of 2007.

Figure 4



Managing content and collections

67. From its inception in 1945, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has ensured the indexing of United Nations documents and other United Nations publications. Since the late 1970s, indexing data have been recorded in the United Nations Bibliographic and Information System (UNBIS) for online access. Retrospective indexing of important early documents is ongoing, as is the indexing of current documents. In 2006, almost 20,000 documents and publications produced at Headquarters and in regional offices were processed; this figure includes documents indexed by the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is also responsible for the UNBIS Thesaurus, which includes all six official languages. This resource serves as an essential tool for the analysis, categorization and retrieval of documents and publications by theme, subject or topic. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge-Sharing Centre has also been active in planning the enhancement of ODS with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management with the aim of setting up a more intuitive application.

68. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continues to collect and maintain hard copies of United Nations and non-United Nations materials in the six official languages of the Organization, for the use of its clients, including delegations of Permanent Missions. Almost 30,000 items were borrowed from the collection for on-site consultation or taken out on loan during 2006. In view of the imminent capital master plan to renovate the United Nations Headquarters complex, which will necessitate the relocation of the Library's collections, an effort is being made to expedite the digitization of United Nations documents to ensure their availability

during the renovation. Discussions are under way with potential external partners for the digitization of those United Nations documents that are not yet in electronic form.

Educational outreach

69. In view of the rapidly changing media environment, in which young people use the Internet, social networks and mobile phones to communicate and obtain information, the Educational Outreach Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge-Sharing Centre has developed new strategies to target this key group. Public and private partnerships have been forged to raise the United Nations profile and reach a wider audience. The UN Works programme partners with celebrities and media networks such as MTV, with its programming expertise and global reach (accessible in 179 countries and in 22 languages), providing opportunities to educate and engage young people. For example, a global on-air, online campaign about climate change will be broadcast by both MTV and Nickelodeon, a children's network, which together have a potential audience of over 570 million viewers worldwide. In another first, MTV and its affiliated network, VH1, are collaborating with the UN Works on a television series hosted by celebrities to promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Key components include the UN Works and MTV co-branded websites with classroom resources, and advocacy toolkits that encourage educators and the public to join the United Nations in support of the achievement of the Goals.

Box 15

The "Water for Life" campaign featuring a documentary about water and sanitation in Africa, initiated by the UN Works in partnership with MTV, was launched in 2006. The campaign's website, which includes educational and advocacy resources, received over 900,000 "unique visits" in the past 12 months. The impact is inspiring. A group of young students in a school in the Bronx, New York City, where 98 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, raised $1,500 in a month to send to the Angolan school featured in the documentary.

70. The Global Teaching and Learning Project, which is also a part of the Library's education outreach, created a multimedia web portal for the first United Nations Global Youth Leadership Summit, held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 to 31 October 2006. With over 400 youth delegates from almost every Member State, the new portal serves as the main source of information on youth activities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Cyberschoolbus website sponsored several essay contests on the achievement of the Goals and received entries from many countries. Its "Ask An Ambassador" feature, which aims to make the United Nations more accessible to young people, has grown in popularity. The site received approximately 2,000 queries in 2006.

Box 16

The total number of unique visitors to the United Nations Cyberschoolbus website in the last six months of 2006 was 1,644,178, a 105 per cent increase over the number of unique visitors during the same period in 2005. The UN Works website is receiving an average of 300,000 page views per month.

71. The Department also supports the Organization-wide print and electronic publications programme by offering a complete design and production service. In 2006, its design of the "Remembrance and Beyond" poster for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust received an "American Inhouse Design Award" from Graphic Design USA, a leading magazine for professional graphic designers in the United States of America.

VIII. Conclusions

72. The Department of Public Information, by better defining its communications goals, making optimal use of new information and communications technology and expanding its partnerships with United Nations system entities, as well as with public, private and non-governmental sectors, has made important progress towards enhancing public awareness about the United Nations.

73. By creating new information and communications tools and better utilizing the opportunities created by the Internet, the Department has expanded its outreach and made significant inroads among students, teachers and the academic community. At the same time, surveys of programmatic activities show that, in addition to utilizing these tools, the Department must continue to tailor its products to target audiences in order to achieve the greatest public impact for its work. The Department, on this solid foundation, is prepared to embrace the challenges ahead.

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Activities of the Department of Public Information

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Summary

The first sentence *should read*

The mission of the Department of Public Information is to help to fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact.

07-29139 (E) 040407